

HOUSE No. 2826

By Mr. Swan of Springfield, petition of Benjamin Swan and others for legislation to establish an office of youth development within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. Children and Families.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PETITION OF:

Benjamin Swan	Shirley Owens-Hicks
Stephen J. Buoniconti	Gloria L. Fox
Robert M. Koczera	

In the Year Two Thousand and Five.

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH AN OFFICE OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. *Whereas*, analysis of current social and health
2 status indicators indicate that an unacceptable number of urban
3 youth are becoming involved in the criminal justice system, expe-
4 riencing high rates of homicide and suicide, engaged in violence
5 and anti-social behaviors, becoming abusers of drugs, alcohol and
6 tobacco, experiencing a high rate of pregnancies and sexual trans-
7 mitted disease, and leaving school without marketable skills.
8 There is clear and present danger that the current socio-economic
9 status of this generation of urban youth will have a negative
10 impact on the general well-being of the entire society of the Com-
11 monwealth; and
12 *Whereas*, public schools have historically been in place as the
13 above stated phenomenon developed, and in spite of the many
14 changes implemented and proposed, do not present the model nor
15 infrastructure needed to provide an appropriate model to amelio-
16 rate the situation with urban youth; and
17 *Whereas*, the current negative social, economic and health
18 status indicators for urban youth may be defined as predictors for
19 negative future social and economic outcomes; and

20 *Whereas*, violent behaviors, both as victim and perpetrators,
21 substance abuse, teen pregnancy and infant mortality, sexual
22 transmitted disease, delinquent behaviors, and suicide are clearly
23 identified as public health concerns;

24 *Therefore*, Notwithstanding any act to the contrary, this act pro-
25 vides that there shall be established within the Executive Office of
26 Health and Human Services, a state-wide office of youth develop-
27 ment within the Department of Public Health which shall organize
28 and implement pilot programs in Boston, Springfield, New Bed-
29 ford, Lawrence, Lowell, Holyoke, and Worcester to demonstrate a
30 coordinated-comprehensive youth development services delivery
31 system to improve and promote good citizenship among youth,
32 between the ages of seven and eighteen. All programs and activi-
33 ties shall be coordinated with the Executive Office of Health and
34 Human Services organizations in each city, so as to optimize the
35 allocation of resources.

1 SECTION 2. Programs and activities shall be provided outside
2 of school hours, year-round, including weekends for individuals
3 who are enrolled in school, with programs and activities for indi-
4 viduals not enrolled in school available on a daily basis.

1 SECTION 3. Programs and activities shall be designed based
2 on youth development research findings, with emphasis directed
3 toward the development and enhancement of social decorum, anti-
4 violent and anti-gang behaviors, positive social behaviors, local
5 and statewide labor pools, job opportunities and career and
6 employment options, citizenship and positive future outlook, com-
7 munity-building, the performing and creative arts, avoiding teen-
8 age pregnancies. With some components modeled after the
9 pre-World War II Work Project Administration (WPA) and
10 Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) the system shall provide prac-
11 tical skill building beyond the theoretical approach used in public
12 schools.

1 SECTION 4. Programs and activities shall be implemented
2 through contracts with federally qualified Section 330, Commu-
3 nity Health Centers as defined by the U.S. Public Service Act of
4 1965. Policy-makers and staff of contracting organizations shall
5 reflect the participant population of the program.

1 SECTION 5. The programs and activities shall include but not
2 be limited to the following: (1) a research component to address
3 issues pertaining to replication of successful strategies identified;
4 (2) a community coordination function to assure that service
5 delivery are coordinated in order to limit any unwanted duplica-
6 tion and/or overlapping; (3) to document and analyze resources
7 and services targeted for the participant population; (4) identifica-
8 tion of the services needed to advance the goals of the program;
9 (5) develop and/or join-in with a community youth worker certifi-
10 cation program, in order to utilize “best practices” in the field of
11 youth development, this component will further enhance skill
12 development and standards for youth development as a discipline;
13 (6) an enhanced management information system support proce-
14 dure to develop a common intake and referral system to increase
15 the use of preventive services, share resource information, avoid
16 duplication and to allow participants to engage in, hands-on appli-
17 cations and learn state-of-the-art computer use; (7) court diver-
18 sion; (8) coordinate mini-grants to various community agencies;
19 (9) coordinate with already established organizations and agen-
20 cies; and (10) develop needed services as required for the success
21 of the program.

1 SECTION 6. There is hereby established and set up on the
2 books of the commonwealth a separate fund to be known as the
3 Office of Youth Development Fund. There shall be credited to say
4 fund an amount of \$15 million dollars in the immediate fiscal year
5 commonwealth’s budget, and thereafter for a period of five (5)
6 years, of which the amount of \$2 million shall be earmarked for
7 Springfield.